



# High School

## Suggested Course Outline in Civics or Government

BASED ON THE  
WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (2018)

# **High School**

## **Suggested Course Outline in Civics or Government**

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October 2023

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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# Foreword

Dear Wisconsin Educators,

I am incredibly proud to present to you the Wisconsin Social Studies/Civics Suggested Scope and Sequence. As a former civics teacher, this subject is near and dear to my heart, and as a resident of this state, I am excited that our future residents, voters, and leaders will be so well-prepared thanks to the civics learning this scope and sequence will provide.

As public education is a constitutional right, it is my firm belief that public education is rooted in representative democracy. It also forms the roots for our democracy to grow and be healthy. Which means, in turn, that our public education system must be strong to provide a solid foundation for a healthy democratic republic to grow from and build upon.

Schools can be – and must be – this foundation. I want all Wisconsin students to grow up to be active participants in the civic life of our state and our nation. To be future active participants in democracy, they need that strong foundation. They need to know how to examine our past. They need to know how to think critically about our present. They need to make informed decisions about their future, which is, of course, our collective future. They need robust civics learning.

Maybe our 2023 Wisconsin Teacher of the Year Sarah Kopplin said it best in her speech at the 2022 State of Education Ceremony:

“Civic learning for our kids is not just about the ability to discern fact from opinion, or to learn content about the founding fathers and our constitution, or know where to vote. Civic learning is also about examining multiple perspectives on historical and contemporary issues. It is about taking responsibility for words and actions. It is about respecting individual worth and human dignity. It’s about children seeing themselves as important members of their community. It is also every child learning that they have a voice, and about getting opportunities to use that voice to shape their future. If we mean to preserve a government that is of, by, and for the people, we must allow our children to experience this type of learning so that they are able to preserve those tenants.”

Public education is about creating a future for all of us in this ever-changing world. Thank goodness we have our public schools where we teach students how to make sense of that change, how to harness it, and how to use these lessons to make their lives – and our state, nation, and world – a better place. We must prepare them well. We must prepare them with civic learning because that is how we ensure the strength of our democracy and our collective future.

Jill K. Underly, PhD  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

# Acknowledgments

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) wishes to acknowledge the ongoing work, commitment, and various contributions of individuals to write this suggested scope and sequence for social studies and civics. A special thanks to the Scope and Sequence Writing Team for taking on this important project that will shape the classrooms of today and tomorrow. Thanks to the many staff members across the division and other teams at DPI who have contributed their time and talent to this project, and to the Region 10 Comprehensive Center based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Thank you to Abby Pfisterer and Kurt Griesemer, the education team at the Wisconsin Historical Society, for all their support and assistance on this project. Special thanks to Khari Bell (Kenosha Unified School District), Chandra Johnson (Howard-Suamico School District), Fannie Y Camacho (Madison Metropolitan School District), and Abie Vang (Green Bay Area Public Schools) for their assistance and curation. Finally, thanks to the Wisconsin educators, business people, parents, and community members who provided comments and feedback on drafts of this work.

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# The Wisconsin Civics Project

## The Vision

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jill Underly announced her intention to focus on civics education as a priority early in her administration in the summer of 2021. Her goals for the Wisconsin Civics Project are:

(1) all students learn to become engaged citizens, critical consumers of information, actively involved in the civil discourse of their communities, state, nation, and world, understand and actively participate in the processes of government (including voting), and are empowered to see themselves as essential members of their communities with opportunities to actively participate in civic learning and problem solving.

(2) all schools and educators are equipped with the resources and support they need to foster excellence in civic literacy and civic engagement, and

(3) all partners and stakeholders are empowered to support the civic mission of schools and collaborate to support civic literacy and provide civic engagement opportunities to students of all ages.

With a vision of fostering excellence in civic literacy and civic engagement for all learners, DPI convened a group of educators from across the state to build a K-12 civics and social studies suggested scope and sequence aligned to our *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies*, the *Six Proven Practices of Civics Education* from the Center for Civics Education, and the *Roadmap* from Educating for American Democracy (EAD), a project of the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and iCivics. This non-partisan project is a culmination of over two years of collaboration between DPI, teachers, administrators, CESAs, and multiple state and community organizations. It incorporates multiple viewpoints and place-based learning and is intended to guide educators in effectively teaching civics and social studies.

The goal of this teaching and learning resource is to support excellence in civic literacy and civic engagement so all students can learn to become both engaged citizens and critical consumers of information. Through multiple grade level units of study, the scope and sequence promotes active involvement among students in the civil discourse of their communities, state, nation, and the world, and supports them in understanding and participating in the processes of government, including voting. It is intended to help students see themselves as essential members of their communities and provide opportunities to actively participate in civic learning and problem solving. In addition, it includes units on understanding tribal nations' government and sovereignty, a key standard in Wisconsin Act 31.

At the time of this publication, the project includes a K-5 suggested scope and sequence, a 6-8 suggested scope and sequence, and a high school suggested semester- and year-long course in government or civics. Moving forward, the Wisconsin Civics Project will be undertaking other things, such as assistance in implementing the K-5 and 6-8 scope and sequence and the high school course, supporting the statewide network of Civics Fellows, and offering quality professional learning for our state educators.

***It is important to note that DPI considers the Wisconsin Civics Project and this publication a work in progress; there may be future iterations of the work, and there will be additional resources aligned to the work.***

# Introduction

## Suggested Course Outline in Civics or Government

The outline includes recommendations for both a one semester (18 week) course and a full-year (36 week) course. The full-year course suggests analyzing topics in greater depth and engaging in additional projects and simulations. Selection of appropriate textbooks is the responsibility of individual districts and schools. It is recommended that teachers begin with Unit 1, but after that, the units can be done in any order.

Each of the five units are organized around “driving questions.” These questions relate to the key concepts and core materials (largely primary sources) that help students engage with relevant material to answer the driving questions. Further, each unit contains connections to modern topics so that students can relate their historical understandings to the world in which they live, and there are recommended assessment activities that utilize higher order thinking and inquiry skills. A significant number of recommended resources can be found on WISELearn, the DPI Open-Educational Resources (OER) platform, with materials specifically aligned to this scope and sequence. Each unit is also supported by associated standards building out detailed content recommendations related to the theme.

Finally, teachers should utilize the *Wisconsin Recommended Civics Education Pedagogy and Practices* in designing their course, to ensure that the course utilizes these research-based and standards-aligned approaches for teaching civics in an engaging and culturally responsive way.

## Reading the Course Outline

Each unit is titled and provided a suggested length for both a semester and a full year course. Directly underneath the title of the unit are the driving questions for the unit and key concepts and core materials. After the rows for driving questions and key concepts and core materials, the writing team offers connections to modern topics and recommended assessment activities. Immediately under those topics is the alignment to the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies*.

The driving questions were formed by the writing team through analysis of the Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies, the Educating for American Democracy Pedagogy Companion, and the Six Proven Practices for Civics Education. They are meant to help guide instruction and determine quality resources and lessons for use in the classroom.

## Considerations:

- There are no required lessons, lesson plans, or resources. Curriculum decisions are 100% made at the district/local level.
- The inquiry strand from the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies* is not listed. Inquiry involves questioning, researching, analyzing, communicating conclusions, and civic engagement, which is reflected in specific pedagogical choices, not content. Many resources the writing team curated are based in the inquiry cycle and align to our inquiry indicators.
- In addition, Standard 4 for Political Science in the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies* reflect civic engagement skills and outcomes that are similarly reflected in pedagogical choices, not content. The resources selected for the civics lens align to these indicators.

# High School: Suggested Course Outline in Civics or Government At-A-Glance

## Unit 1: Foundations of Democracy and Democratic Decision Making

- What were the primary goals and concerns of founding thinkers that influenced the government created by the Constitution?
- After the initial founding period, how have Constitutional Amendments and landmark Supreme Court cases enhanced, hindered, or clarified the application of the founding principles?
- In what ways has the United States government upheld or violated its own values and commitments in the treatment of people from different socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, and gender?
- How is the Wisconsin Constitution similar to or different from the US Constitution?

## Unit 2: Rights and Citizenship

- What rights and freedoms are citizens and non-citizens entitled to in America, and how have these been affirmed, restricted, or expanded by amendments to the Constitution and by the Supreme Court?
- How have Americans advocated for the expansion of rights over time?
- How have our institutions tried to balance individual rights and the common good, and minority rights in the context of majority rule?

## Unit 3: Issues, Policy, and Civic Engagement

- Why do we have so many different levels of government and what do they do?
- What should be the role of government in our society?
- What makes public policy effective?
- What methods do people use to create change when they care about an issue?

## Unit 4: Political Parties, Elections, and Voting

- What factors influence voter engagement and participation?
- How do interest groups and the media impact elections and policy outcomes?
- Why do we have political parties and what role do they play in our political system?
- What tools can we use to understand how and why people vote the way they do?

## Unit 5: International Affairs and Global Citizenship

- What are human rights and how are they protected and enforced?
- In what ways are human rights violated and what remedies exist for those violations?
- How have compromises and diplomacy shaped our society in the United States and abroad?

# Civics Education Pedagogy and Practices

Within the field of civics education, scholars have identified elements of high-quality civics education pedagogy. In Wisconsin we strive to integrate these best practices into civics education, drawing on this past work. This document articulates six practices for civics education, aligned with the *Educating for American Democracy Framework*, work on the *Six Proven Practices for Civics Education* from the Civic Mission of Schools, and the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies*. In addition, it provides reference to high quality resources to support these classroom practices.

Element	Description	Alignment	Resources
<b>1. Classroom as a community of learners</b>	In order to live together in a pluralistic society, we must be able to develop community together. Additionally, cultivating respect and rapport in the classroom is a prerequisite for creating an environment of mutual trust where students can take emotional and intellectual risks. This is especially critical for the civic health of our classrooms and communities; we must develop a classroom community where students appreciate the value of hearing different perspectives and identities, engage in group work and collaboration with all their classmates, and develop respect for the diverse experiences and ideas of their peers.	EAD Pedagogy Companion #1, #3, #6	Danielson Framework
<b>2. Deliberation of contested issues</b>	Deliberation refers to the process of giving multiple perspectives a fair hearing to come to a reasoned conclusion on a contested issue. This could be a historical issue, or a current one. Deliberation engages students by allowing them to explore ideas together, which requires scaffolding of skills for discussion and civil discourse. Ideally students will have opportunities to articulate their genuine ideas and opinions in the deliberation	Civics Proven Practices #2, EAD Pedagogy Companion #5	Deliberating in a Democracy Street Law deliberations C-SPAN deliberations

Element	Description	Alignment	Resources
	rather than simply representing an assigned position.		
<b>3. Information literacy</b>	In order to form well-reasoned opinions on important issues, gather information needed to vote, or participate in democratic decision making, students need to develop and practice information literacy skills. These skills are critical for learning through inquiry and give students the capacity to be effective lifelong learners.	Civics Proven Practices 2017 update  WI Standards for Social Studies: Inquiry #2	SHEG Civic online reasoning and Thinking Like A Historian Sourcing  News Literacy Project  AllSides  Ad Fontes
<b>4. Simulations of authentic civic roles</b>	Simulation gives students an opportunity to learn about civic roles and structures experientially, and then reflect on their learning. Simulation can be an “engagement first” strategy, as the culmination of other learning experiences, or as the framework for a whole unit or course.	Civics Proven Practices #6	iCivics  Legislative Semester  We the People
<b>5. Civic Engagement</b>	Schools are a critical site for students to learn and practice the skills and dispositions that lead to lifelong civic engagement. Incorporating authentic opportunities for students to practice civic engagement skills makes their learning authentic and enhances relevance. Opportunities for students to identify and address needs or challenges in the classroom, school, or community offer learning opportunities of the skills of civic engagement and empower students to see their role in creating the world they want to live in.	WI Standards for Social Studies: Inquiry #5  EAD Pedagogy Companion #5  Civics Proven Practices #3,4,5	Generation Citizen  Project Citizen  Bill of Rights Institute - Student Hub  We the People  Deliberating in a Democracy
<b>6. Inquiry as the Primary Mode of Learning</b>	An inquiry approach to teaching engages students in higher order thinking and problem solving by framing learning through open questions and exploration. It allows students to bring their authentic ideas and lived experiences into the classroom as valuable sources of	EAD Pedagogy Companion, #2 #4  WI Standards for Social	Right Question Institute  C3 Teachers Hub

Element	Description	Alignment	Resources
	<p>knowledge as they explore complex ideas. Within civics, an inquiry approach honors the reality that most issues in our society do not have one right or easy answer, and that the aim of civics education is to work together to explore answers to the question “How do we want to live together?” This approach allows for the integration of primary source documents from a variety of diverse perspectives and identities.</p>	<p>Studies: Inquiry #1-4</p>	

# High School: Suggested Course Outline in Civics or Government

## Unit 1: Foundations of Democracy and Democratic Decision Making

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 5 WEEKS (SEMESTER);  
9 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

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### **1. What were the primary goals and concerns of founding thinkers that influenced the government created by the Constitution?**

#### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Founding Era documents, including Declaration of Independence, Second Treatise on Government, Articles of Confederation, select Federalist Papers, U.S. Constitution (including all amendments).
  - Key Concepts Including:
    - Popular Sovereignty
    - Rule of Law
    - Limited Government
    - Majority Rule/Minority Rights
    - Federalism
    - Separation of Powers
    - Republicanism
    - Checks and Balances
- 

### **2. After the initial founding period, how have Constitutional Amendments and landmark Supreme Court cases enhanced, hindered, or clarified the application of the founding principles?**

**Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Bill of Rights & Selective Incorporation
  - Landmark Supreme Court cases including:
    - Marbury v. Madison
    - McCulloch v. Maryland
- 

**3. In what ways has the United States government upheld or violated its own values and commitments in the treatment of people from different socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, and gender?**

**Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Landmark Supreme Court cases including:
    - Dred Scott v. Sanford
    - Brown v. Board of Education
    - Korematsu v. United States
    - Gideon v. Wainwright
- 

**4. How is the Wisconsin Constitution similar to or different from the U.S. Constitution?**

**Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Wisconsin State Constitution
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**Connection to Modern Topics**

- Privacy Rights
- Civil Rights
- Abortion
- Voting Rights
- Immigration Policy

- Treaty Rights
- Debates over tensions between principles (i.e. liberty v. security, etc.)

### **Recommended Assessment Activities**

- Conduct a simulated Constitutional Convention - either historic or for a new Constitution.
- Engage in a Moot Court for an historic or contemporary Court case.
- Choose a modern social challenge and analyze how foundational principles (i.e. checks and balances, separation of powers, limited government) assist in understanding the different potential solutions.
- Propose and justify changes to the U.S. Constitution.
- Assign a Constitutional amendment or landmark Supreme Court case. Students will research the amendment or case to answer the question, "To what extent did (amendment/court case) enhance, hinder, or clarify the application of founding principles?"

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### **Alignment to the [Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#):**

SS.BH2.a.h Evaluate the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of a country and the world (e.g., language, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, social or financial inequity, political beliefs, access to resources, economics, environment).

SS.BH3.a.h Analyze the means by and extent to which groups and institutions can influence people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings.

SS.Geog4.a.h Analyze how physical and human characteristics interact to give a place meaning and significance (e.g., Panama Canal, Chunnel) and shape culture. Explain how and why place-based identities can shape events at various scales (e.g., neighborhood, regional identity). Explain how and why people view places and regions differently as a function of their ideology, race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, religion, politics, social class, and economic status.

SS.PS1.b.h Evaluate the work and actions of historically significant people and their contributions to the founding principles of the United States. Analyze the foundational ideas of United States government that are embedded in founding era documents. Analyze landmark Supreme Court decisions regarding how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights limit the government, protect individual rights, support the principle of majority rule while protecting the rights of the minority, and

promotes the general welfare. Analyze the meaning and importance of rights in the Wisconsin Constitution and compare or contrast to the United States Constitution.

SS.PS2.a.h Critique the struggle for suffrage and citizenship since the founding period. Analyze the constitutional tension between protecting individual rights and promoting the general welfare and security of the country, as well as between majority rule and minority rights. Assess the impact of individuals, groups, and movements on the development of civil rights for different groups.

SS.PS2.c.h Analyze how the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the restriction and enabled the expansion of rights for groups.

# Unit 2: Rights and Citizenship

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 4 WEEKS (SEMESTER); 8 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

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## **1. What rights and freedoms are citizens and non-citizens entitled to in America and how have these been affirmed, restricted, or expanded by amendments to the Constitution and by the Supreme Court?**

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- United States Naturalization Exam
- Rights of Citizenship
- Tribal Sovereignty and Treaty Rights in Wisconsin
  - Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians v. Voigt
- Bill of Rights & Landmark Cases (may include some or all of the following):
  - Tinker v. Des Moines
  - Citizens United v. FEC
  - WI v. Yoder
  - Engel v. Vitale
  - NY Times v. US
  - DC v. Heller
  - McDonald v. Chicago
  - Mapp v. Ohio
  - Miranda v. Arizona
- 14th Amendment & associated principles:
  - Plessy v. Ferguson
  - Plyler v. Doe
  - University of CA v. Bakke
  - Grutter v. Bollinger

- Loving v. VA
  - Griswold v. CT
  - Roe v. Wade
  - Dobbs v. Jackson
  - US v. Wong Kim Ark
- 

## **2. How have Americans advocated for the expansion of rights over time?**

### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Goals, methods, figures, accomplishments, landmark cases, and modern examples of historical rights movements:
    - African American Civil Rights Movement
    - Women’s Movement
    - American Indian Movement
    - LGBTQ Rights Movement
    - Asian American Movement
    - Chicano Movement
    - Disability Rights Movement
    - Labor Movement
- 

## **3. How have our institutions tried to balance individual rights and the common good, and minority rights in the context of majority rule?**

### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Structural Challenges to Majority Rule:
  - Separation of Powers
  - Supermajority requirements
  - Congressional rules (like the filibuster)
- Expansions of Majority Rule
  - Direct democracy measures (initiative, referendum, recall)

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## Connections to Modern Topics:

- Gun Control
- Abortion
- Immigration
- Taxation/Federal Spending
- Tribal Treaty Rights

## Recommended Assessment Activities:

- Choose a core text and hold a Socratic seminar using a prompt that relates to one of the key concepts from Driving Question #1.
- Engage in a structured academic controversy or philosophical chairs activity around a key civil liberties issue.
- Use current events or a pending (or historic) Supreme Court case.
- Assign students landmark cases; research the significance of those cases and give a brief presentation to debate the importance of the cases in a tournament bracket format.
- Create a study guide for the citizenship exam and create an outline of the steps towards naturalization.
- Using a jigsaw format, students research the goals, strategies, and accomplishments of different civil rights movements (from the list described under Driving Question #2). In mixed groups, compile a comprehensive list of different strategies and rank them in order of effectiveness.

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## Alignment to the [Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#):

SS.BH2.a.h Evaluate the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of a country and the world (e.g., language, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, social or financial inequity, political beliefs, access to resources, economics, environment).

SS.BH3.a.h Analyze the means by and extent to which groups and institutions can influence people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings.

SS.Geog4.a.h Analyze how physical and human characteristics interact to give a place meaning and significance (e.g., Panama Canal, Chunnel) and shape culture. Explain how and why place-based identities can shape events at various scales (e.g., neighborhood, regional identity). Explain how and why people view places and regions differently as a function of their ideology, race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, religion, politics, social class, and economic status.

SS.PS1.a.h Analyze how constitutionalism attempts to preserve fundamental societal values, protects individual freedoms and rights, promotes the general welfare, and responds to changing circumstances and beliefs by defining and limiting the powers of government. Analyze sources of governmental authority.

SS.PS2.a.h Critique the struggle for suffrage and citizenship since the founding period. Analyze the constitutional tension between protecting individual rights and promoting the general welfare and security of the country, as well as between majority rule and minority rights. Assess the impact of individuals, groups, and movements on the development of civil rights for different groups.

SS.PS2.c.h Analyze how the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the restriction and enabled the expansion of rights for groups. Evaluate different goals and methods of groups who have advocated for access to greater rights (e.g., women, religious groups, civil rights groups, indigenous peoples, LGBTQ).

# Unit 3: Issues, Policy, and Civic Engagement

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 3 WEEKS (SEMESTER); 6 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

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## 1. Why do we have so many different levels of government and what do they do?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Types of Governments - Autocracy, Oligarchy, Totalitarian, Representative Democracy, etc.
- Federalism and sovereignty: local, state, tribal, and national governments
- Constitutional limits on governmental power
- Structure/Function of Government at different levels
  - Legislative Branch
  - Executive Branch
  - Judicial Branch
- Tribal Governments
  - Structure/Functions of Tribal Governments
  - Tribal Sovereignty
  - Relationship between tribes, and the states and federal government
  - Protected treaty rights in Wisconsin.
- International Relations
  - Role of the International Institutions & Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Alliances and diplomacy

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## 2. What should be the role of government in our society?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Role of government in protecting individual freedoms, rights, liberties
  - Role of Government in promoting the common good and the general welfare
  - Explore tensions between individual freedoms, rights, and liberties guaranteed to all, and general welfare.
- 

### **3. What makes public policy effective?**

#### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Aspects of effective public policy:
    - Deliberation, transparency, accountability, high quality information
  - Policy Making Process
    - Issue Identification, Agenda Setting, Policy Formation, Lobbying and Coalition building, Policy Adoption, Policy Implementation, Policy Evaluation.
  - Areas of Public Policy
    - Foreign
    - Economic
    - Social
    - Environmental
    - Local
- 

### **4. What methods do people use to create change when they care about an issue?**

#### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Advocacy
- Lobbying
- Elected or appointed service
- Initiative and Referendum
- Litigation
- Civil Disobedience

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## Connections to Modern Topics:

- Tension between state and federal roles and policies
  - Immigration policy
  - Redistricting and Gerrymandering
  - Marijuana legalization
  - Student loan forgiveness
  - Gun control
- Tension between individual rights and the common good
  - Tax policy
  - Health care policy
  - Public health restrictions and mandates

## Recommended Assessment Activities:

- Policy Creation: In groups students identify an issue that could be resolved with a policy change. Generate multiple policy proposals and create an action plan.
- Issue Advocacy: Students identify an issue and develop a plan for raising awareness about this issue. Students could develop end products such as letters to the editor, letters to people in the legislative branches, videos, posters, flyers, campaign related activities and more.
- Issue Analysis: Students choose a current policy issue (from a list provided, or of their choosing) and research how this could be addressed by different levels of government. Research current laws, relevant court cases, and executive actions that relate to the issue.

## Alignment to the [Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#):

SS.PS1.a.h Analyze how constitutionalism attempts to preserve fundamental societal values, protects individual freedoms and rights, promotes the general welfare, and responds to changing circumstances and beliefs by defining and limiting the powers of government. Analyze sources of governmental authority.

SS.PS2.a.h Analyze the constitutional tension between protecting individual rights and promoting the general welfare and security of the country, as well as between majority rule and minority rights.

SS.PS2.b.h Assess the difference in constitutional and legal protections for citizens vs. noncitizens.

SS.PS3.a.h Evaluate their role in government at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.

SS.PS3.c.h Evaluate the structure and functions of governments at the local, state, tribal, national, and global levels. Evaluate the purpose of political institutions at the local, state, tribal, national, global, and supranational or non-government organization (NGO) levels distinguishing their roles, powers, and limitations.

SS.PS3.d.h Evaluate the effectiveness of public policy actions and processes.

# Unit 4: Political Parties, Elections, and Voting

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 4 WEEKS (SEMESTER);  
7 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

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## 1. What factors influence voter engagement and participation?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Voting Amendments in the Constitution (15th, 19th, 24th, 26th)
- Voting rules and regulations and voting in Wisconsin
- Policies that impact voter turnout (i.e. same day registration, Voter ID, absentee voting, early voting, etc.)
- Comparative voting systems
- Types of elections
  - Primary v. general
  - Types of primaries
  - Midterms
  - National, state, and local elections
- Presidential Election process
  - Primaries and caucuses
  - Nominating conventions
  - Electoral College

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## 2. How do interest groups and the media impact elections and policy outcomes?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Federalist 10 and Brutus 1
- Types of interest groups and interest group tactics

- Media's role in politics and public policy
  - Media literacy skills
  - Challenges posed by media and its impact
- 

### **3. Why do we have political parties and what role do they play in our political system?**

#### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Political Parties
    - Two-party v. Multi-party systems
    - Party realignments over time
    - Role of parties at national, state, and local levels
    - Third parties in American politics
    - Party polarization and ideological differences
- 

### **4. What tools can we use to understand how and why people vote the way they do?**

#### **Key Concepts and Core Materials:**

- Political socialization
  - Effects of family, race, ethnicity, religion, class, geography, etc. on political beliefs and behavior
- Public Opinion and polling
  - Principles of public opinion
  - How to read a poll
  - How political parties, interest groups and candidates use and attempt to shape public opinion

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## Connections to Modern Topics:

- In-depth analysis of national, state or local elections – paying attention to issues, candidates, and campaign strategies
- Voting laws at the national, state and local level
- Public opinion polling on elections and issues

## Recommended Assessment Activities:

- Run a school wide mock election to coincide with a state or national election.
- Hold a Socratic Seminar or other structured discussion about voting rights or suggested changes to voting laws.
- Attend a state or local government meeting and write a reflection about a particular issue or process or local government.
- Create a voter guide for state or local elections that provide analysis of key issues and candidates.
- Create and evaluate solutions to increase voter participation.
- Conduct a mock election for Governor or U.S. Senate. Have students serve as candidates, advertising teams, and policy gurus. Present the campaign's creations to a group of local experts for evaluation.

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## Alignment to the [Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#):

SS.BH2.a.h Evaluate the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of a country and the world (e.g., language, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, social or financial inequity, political beliefs, access to resources, economics, environment).

SS.BH3.a.h Analyze the means by and extent to which groups and institutions can influence people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings.

SS.PS2.a.h Critique the struggle for suffrage and citizenship since the founding period.

SS.PS2.b.h Assess the difference in constitutional and legal protections for citizens vs. noncitizens. Demonstrate the skills necessary to participate in the election process

(i.e., registering to vote, identifying and evaluating candidates and issues, and casting a ballot).

SS.PS2.c.h Analyze how the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the restriction and enabled the expansion of rights for groups. Evaluate different goals and methods of groups who have advocated for access to greater rights (e.g., women, religious groups, civil rights groups, indigenous peoples, LGBTQ).

SS.PS3.a.h Create and evaluate solutions to increase voter participation. Evaluate their role in government at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.

SS.PS3.b.h Evaluate the role of various types of media in elections and functions of government. Analyze how the United States political system is shaped by political parties, elections and the election process, including the caucus and primary systems and procedures involved in voting. Evaluate civic institutions and explain how competing interests impact societal change (e.g., lobbying, citizens groups, special interest groups).

SS.PS3.c.h Evaluate the structure and functions of governments at the local, state, tribal, national, and global levels. Evaluate the purpose of political institutions at the local, state, tribal, national, global, and supranational or non-government organization (NGO) levels distinguishing their roles, powers, and limitations.

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# Unit 5: International Affairs and Global Citizenship

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 2 WEEKS (SEMESTER);  
4 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

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## 1. What are human rights and how are they protected and enforced?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the concept of human rights
    - Connections between Natural Rights theory and modern conceptions of human rights
  - Comparative constitutions and the rights of people around the world
  - International, supranational, and non-governmental organizations and their role in the world
- 

## 2. In what ways are human rights violated and what remedies exist for those violations?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- International and supranational entities including:
    - United Nations
    - International Criminal Court
    - Geneva Conventions and Protocols
- 

## 3. How have compromises and diplomacy shaped our society in the United States and abroad?

### Key Concepts and Core Materials:

- Role of constitutional powers and U.S. government structure in foreign affairs
- Methods of diplomacy and compromise as a tool of international engagement

- U.S. involvement with international and supranational organizations
  - Treaties and Executive Agreements
- 

### **Connections to Modern Topics:**

- Foreign policy conflicts – both direct and indirect
  - Relations with multiple regions and countries.
  - Use of economic and/or political sanctions
- Debates over global issues, such as:
  - Climate change
  - Human rights abuses
  - International/Free trade policies
  - Impacts of globalization
  - Role of the U.S. in foreign conflicts and the impact of foreign conflicts on the U.S.

### **Recommended Assessment Activities:**

- Conduct a “Situation Room” simulation. Choose an historic, contemporary, or hypothetical foreign policy situation.
- Hold a mock debate or Senate hearing on an historic, contemporary, or hypothetical treaty.
- Hold a Model UN simulated hearing.
- Conduct project-based learning or civic engagement activities based on the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.
- Write a letter to an organization such as Amnesty International, the International Red Cross, or others stating your viewpoint on a particular international issue.
- Create an action campaign for an existing or fictional non-governmental organization. What problem are you addressing and what steps will you take?

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## Alignment to the [Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#):

SS.BH2.a.h Evaluate the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of a country and the world (e.g., language, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, social or financial inequity, political beliefs, access to resources, economics, environment).

SS.BH3.a.h Analyze the means by and extent to which groups and institutions can influence people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings.

SS.PS1.a.h Analyze sources of governmental authority.

SS.PS2.c.h Analyze the role of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs such as Save the Children or the Red Cross) in how human rights have been addressed in different countries.

SS.PS3.c.h Evaluate the structure and functions of governments at the local, state, tribal, national, and global levels. Evaluate the purpose of political institutions at the local, state, tribal, national, global, and supranational or non-government organization (NGO) levels distinguishing their roles, powers, and limitations.

# Full Year Course Summative Assessment/Additions

SUGGESTED UNIT LENGTH: 2 WEEKS (FULL-YEAR)

With a full year course, teachers have the opportunity to add additional authentic experiences for students, whether they be simulations, projects or community engagement activities. Below is a list of additional resources provided as a starting point for teachers. Some of the programs or curricula listed below are best suited as an integrated part of the curriculum as opposed to a stand-alone activity.

## Possible Simulations or Other Assessment Activities:

- [Mikva Challenge](#): Focus on student voice, engagement, and informed action.
- [Choices Program](#): Deliberation materials on current events and international affairs (purchase).
- [Purple State](#): Simulation that focuses on the role of media in state politics.
- [Deliberating in a Democracy](#): Structured Academic Controversy lessons on a variety of topics.
- [Spotlight on Change Agents](#): Students identify an issue that interests them, and investigate change agents who are working to create change on this issue.
- [Simulations of Democratic Processes Toolkit](#): From the Illinois Civics Hub, this resource includes simulations for elections, all three branches of national government, state and local government, and budgets and government spending.
- [C-SPAN Student Cam Competition](#): Student documentary competition through C-SPAN that encourages students to think critically about issues that affect their communities and nation.

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The three links below point to resources produced by trusted partners across the country, and provide additional resources closely aligned with the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies* and the Five Themes from Educating for American Democracy.

[Massachusetts Government Course Outline](#): This document is well aligned with the Five Themes/Units outlined below and provides helpful suggestions for planning that coincide with these Wisconsin based resources.

[Recommended Resources from Washington State](#): This document is a very helpful compilation of resources for teachers who are creating a government course. It highlights high quality teaching resources on a variety of themes, as well as suggesting “frameworks” for designing a course.

[Center for Civics Education 9-12 Content Standards](#): These detailed standards provide additional background and context.

Districts who are looking for resources that are closely aligned with the *Wisconsin Recommended Civics Education Pedagogy and Practices* or wish to build a full year course in government or civics could consider resources from the following organizations.

## Comprehensive Curriculum

- [Project Based Civics Course](#): Simulation and project based curriculum
- [iCivics](#): High school teaching materials and scope and sequence (create login)
- [National Constitution Center Curriculum](#): 15 units focused on the Constitution
- [Legislative Semester](#): Full semester simulation focused on current issues and student voice
- [We the People](#): curriculum focused on the Constitution and Bill of Rights
- [Project Citizen](#): curriculum focused on civic engagement

# References

Educating for American Democracy. 2022. "Pedagogy Companion to the Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy." Accessed October 1, 2023.

<https://www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pedagogy-Companion-to-the-EAD-Roadmap.pdf>

Education Commission of the States. 2014. "Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning." Accessed October 1, 2023.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/48/11048.pdf>

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